



Consultation on the Variation to the Composition of the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

A summary of consultation responses

November 2019

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We help people and wildlife adapt to climate change and reduce its impacts, including flooding, drought, sea level rise and coastal erosion.

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Foreword

The Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCCs) are Committees established by the Environment Agency under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 that brings together members appointed by Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) and independent members with relevant experience for three purposes:

- To ensure there are coherent plans for identifying, communicating and managing flood and coastal erosion risks across catchments and shorelines.
- To promote efficient, targeted and risk-based investment in flood and coastal erosion risk management that optimises value for money and benefits for local communities.
- To provide a link between the Environment Agency, LLFAs and other risk management authorities, and other relevant bodies to bring about mutual understanding of flood and coastal erosion risks in its area.

There are 12 Committees in England and each has a Chair appointed by Defra. The Thames RFCC covers the River Thames catchment from Oxfordshire in the west, through London to Essex. It covers an area from Northamptonshire and Hertfordshire in the north and to Surrey and West Sussex in the south.

The aim of the consultation was to gain feedback from all those individuals, groups and organisations, who are affected by, or interested in, the proposed Variation of the Composition of the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, in line with The Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (England and Wales) Regulations 2011.

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1. Introduction

The proposed local government reorganisations in Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire, planned from April 2020, will create new unitary authorities. As a result, the existing Composition of the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee will need to be varied to accommodate these changes, as the existing Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) for these areas will no longer exist. We have therefore consulted on the proposal for the Variation to the Composition of the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. The variation process is set out in The Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (England and Wales) Regulations 2011, Part 3 (9) and requires Ministerial approval.

The Composition Variation must be made in line with the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (England and Wales) Regulations 2011 and subsequently there are certain limitations when proposing a new scheme.

In 2011 when the transition was made from Regional Flood Defence Committees to Regional Flood and Coastal Committees, it was confirmed that Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) representation was a matter for individual RFCCs to propose.

2. How we ran the Consultation

We invited comments from those individuals, groups and organisations, who are affected by, or interested in, the proposed Variation of the Composition of the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC), in line with The Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (England and Wales) Regulations 2011.

We ran an e-consultation and made hard copies available to those who requested them. We also engaged with key stakeholders to explain our proposals and to understand their views. This document summarises the responses to the consultation questions and any relevant points raised.

We thanked all respondents for their time and contribution to this consultation.

2.1. Proposals

- No changes to the number of independent (EA appointed) or LLFA Members or to the LLFAs sharing seats.
- The existing shared seat position for Buckinghamshire County Council would be transferred to the new proposed Buckinghamshire Council.
- Oxfordshire County Council would continue to represent the small part of the proposed West Northamptonshire Council that is within Thames RFCC area.

Full details on the consultation and proposals are located:

<https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/lincolnshire-and-northamptonshire/variation-to-composition-of-thames-rfcc/>

2.2. Consultation Period

We ran the consultation from the 7th May 2019 to 18th June 2019.

2.3. Level of Response

We received a total of 1 responses, of which:

- 1 was from an organisations or groups.

3. Summary of Responses to each Consultation Question

3.1. Question 1: Do you agree with the proposed changes to the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee composition?

Number of responses recorded against each of the three possible answers:

Yes: 1 out of the 1 responses.

No: 0 out of the 1 responses.

Don't know: 0 out of the 1 responses.

Summary of relevant key points raised:

- This is a sensible approach.

The responses to this question were carefully considered and reviewed by the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee at their Meeting on the 10th July 2019, please see **Section 4** for details of the outcome.

3.2. Question 2: Please let us know if you think there is anything else we should be considering?

Summary of relevant key points raised:

- None.

4. Next Steps

The responses to the Consultation were carefully considered and reviewed by the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee at their Meeting on the 10th July 2019. Details of the Meeting are located at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/thames-regional-flood-and-coastal-committee>

The Committee agreed to the Proposals to the Variation to the Composition of the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee that was to be submitted in two parts (Phase 1 and Phase 2) for Ministerial approval. The initial Variation was split into two Phases because the local government reorganisation in Northamptonshire was postponed from April 2020 to April 2021:

- Phase 1, to be enacted from the 1st April 2020, covers the local government reorganisation in Buckinghamshire.

- Phase 2, to be enacted from the 1st April 2021, covers the local government reorganisation in Northamptonshire.

The Environment Agency FCRM Committee considered and approved Phase 1 on behalf of the Environment Agency Board.

The Minister of State considered and approved the Phase 1 Variation that will be enacted from the 1st April 2020.

Phase 2 implementation will involve in 2020, approval from the Environment Agency FCRM Committee before submission to the Minister of State for consideration and approval before 1st December 2020 and subsequent enactment from the 1st April 2021.

5. List of abbreviations

'Defra' means Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

'EA' means Environment Agency.

'FCRM' means Flood and Coastal Risk Management.

'LLFA' means Lead Local Flood Authority.

'RFCC' means Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.

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